

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please add the following paragraph prior to the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 5:

(New) The present application is a continuation of U.S. Application Serial No. 09/758,521 filed January 10, 2001, pending, which is a continuation of Application Serial No. 09/305,803 filed May 4, 1999, now U.S. Patent No. 6,231,506. Application Nos. 09/758,521 and 09/305,583 and U.S. Patent No. 6,231,506 are hereby incorporated herein, in their entireties, by reference thereto.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 24, line 13 as follows:

(Amended) Although the reinforcing members may be [a] permanent or removable members within the platform blades themselves, the reinforcing members are preferably one or more substantially rigid members extending from each of the fixed housing 21 and the moveable housing 22. In a preferred embodiment, fixed and moveable housings 21 and 22 have a pin extending therefrom which may be received within a mating cavity within first and second platform blades 14 and 16. The pin operates to spread the load developed in the mechanism over a larger internal area within the platform blades 14 and 16 and reduces the effective beam length of unreinforced platform blade material subjected to the operating loads. The pin may be straight pin 40['] illustrated in Figure 3. More preferably, fixed and moveable housings 21 and 22 have tapered pins 40 and platform blades 14 and 16 have mating tapered cavities 41 for receiving tapered pins 40. The tapered construction tends to allow the user to easily align pin 40 with cavity 41 and allows the pins 40 to fit relatively snugly within cavities 41 without significant binding during insertion that could otherwise occur between elongated pins and mating cavities which are designed to be very close fitting.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 30, line 15, as follows:

(Amended) Suture lock 80 may be biased towards the locked position, preferably using a small spring between the suture lock and the recess 75. In a preferred embodiment, a piece of resilient closed

cell foam [85] 89 is fixed to body 83 to provide the desired biasing effect. Free end 84 may optionally have a number of teeth or ridges 82 to ensure acceptable traction against the suture material.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 40, line 9 as follows:

(Amended) Figures 22A-32 illustrate a preferred embodiment of an alternative instrument mount assembly 220. Preferably, the degrees of freedom available for maneuvering instrument mount 220 is substantially the same as that of instrument mount assembly 20. Instrument mount assembly 220 preferably has ball joint 112 between mount base 221 and mount body 222, a rotational joint 157 between mount body 222, and a shaft hub assembly 227 which allows rotation and translation of an instrument shaft held between shaft grip 226 and clutch member [226] 225 of shaft hub assembly 227. Instrument mount assembly 220, however, has a different mechanism for controlling or locking the various joints and connections and may also provide a means for releasing and removing the shaft from the bulk of the remainder of instrument mount assembly 220.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 45, line 11 as follows:

(Amended) Preferably, projection 267 and 268 have lead-ins 291 and 292 which [urged] urge projections 267 and 268 together as they are advanced through hole 279 so that shaft grip 226 can simply be aligned with lead-ins [292] 291 and 292 and then snapped into place without any further action. Alignment of hole 279 is generally quite simply accomplished as the cylindrical exterior surface 277 of sleeve 260 is slidably received in a substantially coaxial arrangement within center bore 219 of clutch member 225. Clutch member 225 may optionally have first and second flexures 281 and 282 having first and second retaining features 283 and 284 so that it may be snapped in place thereafter retained within mount body 222.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 50, line 10 as follows:

(Amended) As depicted in the Figures, the shaft means 3 and thus the pushrod 505, are formed with a slight arcuate configuration, which permits additional degrees of freedom and movement and orientation of the distal end of the shaft means 3 and thus of the heart contract member 1. Rotation of

the shaft means 3 about the axis of confinement within the shaft grip [495 or 495a], moves the distal end of the shaft means 3 through a circular path while changing the angles through which the contract member 1 can be oriented. This allows a surgeon to conveniently achieve a wider range of positions and orientations of the contact member relative to the patient's heart, while keeping the proximal end of the shaft means 3 and handle mechanism 468 out of the way as much as possible.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 55, line 9 as follows:

(Amended) Because the preferred location of the attachment of the connecting shaft 3 to the base portion may be different from surgeon to surgeon and from procedure to procedure, it may be desirable to have the ball/post moveable to more than one location. In one embodiment shown in Figure 41, for example, ball/post 562 has threaded end 561 which may be threaded into any desired threaded receiving hole 563 provided in stabilizer base 560. Ball post [564] 562 is preferably provided with one or more flats 564 on the exterior thereof to facilitate tightening or loosening of the threaded connection. In the embodiment shown, stabilizer base 560 has threaded receiving holes 563 to provide center, offset right, and offset left connecting positions.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 60, line 20 as follows:

(Amended) Figures 52A and 52B illustrate another single contract stabilizer base having a bail 762 which is secured at only one end. Stabilizer base 760 may have a housing 765 having a series of internal teeth (not shown). Bail 762 has a toothed end 766 which is received with housing 765 to engage with the mating teeth provided therein. As with the embodiment above, bail 762 has a generally parallel portion 763 which is moveable relative to stabilizer base 760 in the direction generally indicated by arrow 767 to stretch or compress the surrounding tissue for optimum vessel presentation. Bail 762 may have tab 761 to facilitate grasping by an instrument, such as for example forceps [761]. The free end 764 of bail 762 is preferably rounded or somewhat bulbous so as to be atraumatic. Because bail 762 attaches only at one end, the stabilizer can be easily removed from the completed anastomosis without removing bail 762 from stabilizer base 760.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 61, line 8 as follows:

(Amended) In another embodiment of the stabilizer, the wire frame member or bail may have a drive mechanism for moving the bail relative to the stabilizer base. Referring to Figure 53 stabilizer base 770 has housing 771 which is constructed with guide channel 774 having gear 775 mounted for rotation therein. Bail 772 has a toothed end 773 which may be assembled within guide channel 774 such that rotation of gear 775 causes bail 772 to be moved in and out in the direction indicated by arrow 43. Gear 775 may be driven by any suitable tool, for example, gear 775 may have a drive hole 778 for engagement by a suitable drive tool [771] 776.